



The Torch

Keeping the Promise

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Gen. Dempsey speaks at National POW/MIA ceremony



Photo courtesy of DoD

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin E. Dempsey gives a speech to service members and families during the National POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremony Sept. 20. The ceremony is a tribute to honor all service members who were captured or are still missing in action from past conflicts. It also commemorated the sacrifices their families make each day.

Friday, Sept. 20, marked the commemoration of National POW/MIA Recognition Day. This day honored more than 83,000 service members for their sacrifices as prisoners of war, those who have not yet returned home, as well as, those who returned. The day also served as a reminder of the commitment and bravery that American service members and their families make every day.

In his proclamation for National POW/MIA Recognition day, President Obama said, "America remains steadfast in our determination to recover our missing patriots. Our work is not finished until our heroes are returned safely to our shores or a full accounting is provided to their loved ones."

National POW/MIA Recognition Day was established by Congress in the 1998 National Defense Authorization Act. It honors those who were prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action.

National POW/MIA Recognition Day is held annually on the third Friday in September. Every year, hundreds of ceremonies are held around the country, to include the Pentagon in Washington D.C.

During the ceremony at the Pentagon, the first enlisted combat veteran to lead the Department of Defense and a keynote speaker for the event, Secretary of Defense Chuck

Hagel stated, "Americans in uniform today are inspired by the fierce resolve of generations of American POWs. We also draw inspiration from the bonds of camaraderie, compassion, and love that prompted our POWs to care for each other, and sustain each other, through these terrible, terrible months and years of hardship."

Also at the ceremony, guest speaker, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin E. Dempsey said, "I am also inspired by the efforts of the countless individuals and organizations that are dedicated to honoring American prisoners of war and who continue the search for those missing in action. Their efforts are fueled by human sweat and ignited by their unwavering determination. They keep our nation's promise to never leave a comrade."

There are more than 700 full-time military and civilian personnel working to account for missing service members. Organizations around the U.S. to include the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL), Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory (LSEL), Service Casualty Offices (SCO), Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), Stony Beach and Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), are dedicated to the fullest possible accounting of missing service members and those who defended our country.

Vietnam and Cambodia Talks



DoD photo by Jonathan Daniel

DASD Winfield (right) accepts case information on four previously restricted U.S. loss incident sites now open to U.S. teams from Senior Lt. Gen. Nguyen Chi Vinh (left), Vietnam's vice defense minister, during the U.S. - Vietnam Defense Policy Dialogue held in Washington in October. The opening of these sites represents another step forward in our efforts to achieve the fullest possible accounting for our personnel lost in Southeast Asia. During these talks, senior U.S. and Vietnam officials discussed the accounting mission and future efforts to account for missing American personnel from the war.

In October, LTG Nguyen Chi Vinh, Vietnam's vice defense minister, traveled and led the U.S. - Vietnam Defense Policy Dialogue here in Washington, D.C. During the talks U.S. and Vietnamese officials discussed the accounting mission and future operations in accounting for missing service members.

In September, representatives from JPAC and DPMO traveled to Southeast Asia to participate in POW/MIA technical talks with their Vietnamese and Cambodian counterparts. During the talks in Hanoi, Vietnamese and U.S. officials discussed the Vietnamese government release of archival documents that might contain information regarding missing service members. U.S. and Vietnamese officials also commemorated 25 years of sustained joint cooperation in pursuing the fullest possible accounting for Americans still missing in Vietnam. DPMO staff also traveled to Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to participate in technical talks. Both Vietnamese and Cambodian officials reiterated their support for the POW/MIA accounting mission and pledged continued cooperation.

Chinese delegation visits DPMO

In May, a six-person delegation from China's People's Liberation Army Archive/Ministry of National Defense traveled to Washington, D.C., for annual talks with DPMO about archival research efforts and personnel accounting activities in China. Prior to arriving in Washington D.C., the Chinese delegation spent two days in Hawaii at JPAC, participating in briefings and talks. During these talks, the Chinese updated U.S. officials on progress made while preparing this year's personnel accounting and archival research annual report and provided research guidance for future work.

2014 National POW/MIA Recognition Day poster

We are looking for great ideas to create the 2014 National POW/MIA Recognition Day poster and we want your feedback and comments. Please submit a description of your idea or draft poster to outreach.dpmo@osd.mil, to be considered as we develop the 2014 National POW/MIA Recognition Day poster. We can only choose one design.

Family Updates



Heather Harris (left), a WWII historian, briefs the Ferguson family on the loss of their loved one at the Chicago Family Update in Sept. 2013. The family received information on the cause of the loss and the government's efforts to locate and recover the remains of missing service members. DPMO conducts between six to eight Family Updates a year within the U.S.

On Jan. 11, 2014, the government will travel to Portland, Ore., to conduct the first Fiscal Year 14 Family Update. As future 2014 Family Updates are scheduled, we will post them to our webpage.

To register or get more information on future family updates, continue to check/monitor our webpage:

www.dtic.mil/dpmo.



DPMO launched a Twitter account to help highlight the work of DPMO and the Accounting Community to account for more than 83,000 missing Americans from past conflicts.

Follow DPMO @DoDPowMIA

WWII Accounting in Indonesia

On Sept. 18, the DPMO, in coordination with JPAC, provided a policy level briefing on remains recovery and the prospect of operations with the Indonesian Ministry of Defense during the annual Indonesia-U.S. Strategic Dialogue at the Pentagon. The briefing was very well received, and the Indonesian delegation pledged its full support and assistance for our mission.

Research in Korea

From Sept. 5-15, a research analyst from DPMO traveled to Seoul, South Korea, to coordinate with the Korean Ministry of National Defense Archives about accessing records related to U.S. losses during the Korean War. The researcher also augmented the JPAC Korean Field Element at two investigation sites. As of Nov. 7, 2013, there are 7,901 service members who are still unaccounted for from the Korean War.

Recently accounted for

The following servicemen were recently accounted for as of Nov. 1 and returned to their families for burial with full military honors:

WWII

2nd Lt. Vernal J. Bird, USAAF
Sgt. Dominick J. Licari, USAAF
1st Lt. Louis L. Longman, USAAF
Staff Sgt. Thomas L. Meek, USMC
2nd Lt. Valorie L. Pollard, USAAF
Tech. Sgt. 5th Grade Oneal Rush, USA
Capt. Franklin B. Tostevin, USAAF
Capt. Henry S. White, USMC
Pfc. Manley F. Winkley, USMCR

Pfc. Ronald C. Huffman, USA
Sgt. Delbert D. Kovalcheck, USA
Cpl. Glyndon E. Moyer, USA
Pfc. Jonathan R. Posey Jr., USMCR
Sgt. 1st Class William Robinson, USA
Sgt. Charles L. Scott, USA
Sgt. 1st Class Joseph D. Steinberg, USA
Cpl. Robert J. Tait, USA
Sgt. Clement Thibodeaux Jr., USA
Sgt. Melvin E. Wolfe, USA

Korean War

Cpl. Armando Alvarez, USA
Pfc. Herene K. Blevins, USA
Cpl. George W. Conklin Jr., USA
Pfc. Norman P. Dufresne, USA
Cpl. Harold A. Evans, USA

Vietnam War

Col. Francis J. McGouldrick Jr., USAF
Lt. Col. Robert E. Pietsch, USAF
Staff Sgt. Lawrence Woods, USA

Searching for remains in Italy

DPMO's World War II analysts traveled to southern Italy in March, to investigate the loss of eight missing servicemen. DPMO analyst Mr. Josh Frank led the team, which included analysts Dr. Cynthia Chambers and Lt. Cmdr. Brian Foss, Dr. Joan Baker, forensic anthropologist/scientific advisor to DPMO and interpreter Staff Sgt. Richard Compasso. During the visit, the team conducted site survey training and evaluated three sites for potential future excavation. The team also conducted research to aid future excavations, discussed unilateral turnover of remains and future disinterments with Italian officials.

WWII investigations continue in France



Dr. Ian Spurgeon, Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office historian, is shown next to part of the wing of a B-17 that crashed Aug. 1, 1944, near the French village of Neron, France. Three members of the crew are still missing.

DPMO traveled throughout France to investigate 10 WWII loss incidents, from which 17 U.S. personnel are missing. On average, the cases have been under active research by DPMO analysts in the U.S. and French archives for more than one year. This trip was coordinated with mayors and regional officials through eight months of careful planning, to ensure that the sites, mostly in rural areas, would be available for research visits.

DPMO and JPAC staff located eight aircraft crash sites and one Sherman tank. Each site will be assessed for further actions. In all, the staff interviewed more than two dozen witnesses and local individuals, and the team made full geographic surveys of each site and documented all debris and WWII artifacts.

During the trip, DPMO investigators met with personnel from the U.S. Embassy - Paris and local researchers to continue receiving information related to other unsolved cases.

The France trip represents the second such investigation DPMO has made in the country since 2012.

As of today, there are more than 73,000 service members still missing from WWII.

In September, a team of historians and analysts from



Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office
2000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-2600

For your information

Family members seeking more information about missing loved ones may call their respective Service Casualty Office:

U.S. Air Force
(800) 531-5501

U.S. Marine Corps
(800) 847-1597

U.S. Army
(800) 892-2490

U.S. Navy
(800) 443-9298

U.S. Department of State
(202) 647-5470

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DoD Photo by DPMO Josh Frank

Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office World War II analysts traveled to southern Italy in March to investigate the loss of eight missing servicemen. While in Italy, the analysts worked with the Salerno Air Finders, a group that assists government agencies locate WWII crash sites in southern Italy.

SUBSCRIPTION UPDATE:

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